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STATEMENT BY JAMES E. WEBB, ADMINISTRATOR, NASA

For more than two years now the United States has moved forward with its Mercury Manned Space Flight Program. This program from its inception has been operated in the belief that the public has a right to know what this country is doing in the space field. The press has had full access to the program. This has been so because we operate in a democratic society where our failures are known as well as our successes.

I think the press and the public should be aware that this frequently places a serious psychological burden on the United States all over the world. If any one flight is delayed or is not a success, every detail is completely reported and is contrasted to the Soviet space effort, the events of which do not become a matter of public record until a success is achieved. The recent Soviet flight was already successfully in progress before announced, and neither details nor the scientific data collected are yet available.

NASA has not attempted to encourage press coverage of the first Mercury-Redstone manned flight. It has responded to press and television requests with the result that over 400 representatives of the press, radio and TV are now at Cape Canaveral.

Our first manned space flight is an important milestone in the progress of our space effort, but we must keep the perspective that each flight is but one of the many milestones we must pass. Some will completely succeed in every respect, some partially, and some will fail.

From all of them will come mastery of the vast new space environment on which so much of our future depends.

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